

A Study On Qualities Of An Effective Global Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Culture plays an important role in shaping how leaders ought to be effective in different set up. As Indian is on cross roads of fast globalization, high impact digitalization, economic growth and loaded with its own rich cultural heritage and value-based way of business and life, there is an imperative need to reflect on issues pertinent to the challenges faced by Indian leaders working across the globe; identifying the essential traits/behaviours for functional excellence especially from the indigenous perspective and finally drawing a plan to be culturally sensitive at work life should be the priority. The present paper gives a panoramic approach to analyse the seminal qualities that attribute to the core perspectives of quality leadership in the matrix of global thinking – a fast emerging scenario of global intervention and its relevance to the emerging trends of leadership qualities which are essential for futuristic development in a global scenario. Amongst the mainly qualities, emotional intelligence, empathy and self awareness were found to be the most essential qualities required to be effective as a leader in a global functioning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization encouraged most multinational corporations (MNC's) to change to compete in global markets, increasing mobility of human resources across the globe, giving rise to the challenge of cross cultural interactions between employees and managers from different cultures (Martvirk, 2007) and making cross cultural leadership imperative. Being aware of the importance of cross cultural leadership development to global business, majority of organizations actively seek a variety of approaches to improve global talent development (Karmer, 2005).

Cross cultural leadership has developed as a way to understand leaders who work in the newly globalized market. Today's international organizations require leaders who can adjust to different environment quickly and work with partners and employees of other cultures (House, 2002).

CHALLENGES OF CROSS CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Research into cross cultural leadership suggests the following challenges to global leaders

- Language barriers
- Identity based conflicts
- Managing and motivating culturally diverse teams
- Developing cross cultural competencies and adapting leadership styles

- Cultural disparity concerning work values, norms and attitudes (Chrobot-Mason, 2007, Wong, 2012, Steers, 2012, Caligiuri, 2013).

EFFECTIVENESS OF CROSS CULTURAL LEADERSHIP – ESSENTIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Caligiuri and Tarique (2009) argued that leaders who can manage in complex, changing, uncertain and ambiguous global environments are essential to MNC's future effectiveness.

In a study done by Deng and Gibson (2009), it was identified that transformational leadership, emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence were contributors to effective cross cultural leadership.

Likewise, in yet another study done by Manning, (2003), indicated relationship competencies and openness to new perspectives are crucial leadership characteristics related to cross cultural leadership effectiveness.

In similar line, a survey done by Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) on 420 global leaders found tolerance of ambiguity, cultural flexibility and reduced ethnocentrism as related to global leadership effectiveness.

In a qualitative study of Asian leader in MNC, the following results emerged (Hsiu-Ching Ko, 2015)

- Personality characteristics –
 - Extraversion, integrity, open mindedness, self learning, sincerity.
- Leadership strategies –
 - Building cohesion and harmony for successful teamwork, develop appropriate behaviour, establish intrapersonal effectiveness, communication, fully empowering the subordinates, leading with heart, understanding and appreciating local culture.
- Core competencies –
 - Communication skills, professional knowledge and skills, cultural intelligence and language skills.

Rock's study (2013) analysed data for 1748 middle and top level executives representing 128 nationalities. The assessment tool used was Global Executive leadership Inventory (2005). The findings revealed that Eastern and Western managers diverged significantly in four of the twelve dimensions – designing and aligning, outside orientation, emotional intelligence and resilience to stress. Eastern managers were perceived to have more of actions with successful leadership than their Western counterparts.

ASIAN PERSPECTIVES OF GLOBAL LEADERSHIP – GLOBAL LEADERSHIP FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BHAGAVAT GITA

What can ancient Indian mythology teach today's global leaders? This is a question all of us must reflect upon at this juncture of changing value systems. According to Chatterjee (2012), leader reaches their full potential only if they overcome the limitations of their ego. They do this by cultivating a mentality that sees reality clearly, not through the faulty perception of a

mind unsettled by a ‘mob’ of emotion and conditional impulses. A leader in the 21st century needs to deal with not only emergencies but emergent conditions due to cultural variations. It requires a rare leadership virtue called ‘awareness’. The journey of awareness starts with self-awareness. A leader of an organization who wants to achieve a target has to first focus on his/her inner resolve to do so. A leader has to achieve mastery over his own mind before he can influence the minds of others.

The leadership lessons derived from spirituality and faith encompass the age old values and virtues such as vision, excellence, integrity, perseverance and discipline which are also applicable to the contemporary leadership scenario. These values and virtues are the pillars of leadership in any group, place or time.

The concept of spiritual intelligence is becoming popular in organizational and leadership development. The core characteristics of a leader are self awareness, vision, values – all of which are essential to contemporary leadership. Spiritual leadership does not refer to religion or tradition but involves motivating people by influencing their souls or spirits instead of controlling them. (Zohar, Danah, 2011).

Various Indian thinkers and philosophers are of the opinion that leader should embrace rather than avoid formidable challenges because they bring out the leader’s potential strengths. Further, it is crucial for leaders to distinguish the positive from negative aspects of organizational culture. Bhagavat Gita alludes to self awareness and empathy as key factors that determine a leader’s effectiveness. Authorities in psychology have suggested that a leader’s emotional intelligence such as self awareness and empathy plays a key role in overall performance of an organization. (Kumar, Anjum, Sinha, 2015).

House and Javidian (2014), identified six global leadership behaviours. They are as follows

- Charismatic value based leadership
- Team oriented leadership
- Participative leadership
- Humane oriented leadership
- Autonomous leadership
- Self protective leadership

The portrait of an ineffective global leader is one who is asocial, malevolent, self focused and autocratic. To succeed, global leaders need to have a global mindset, tolerate high levels of ambiguity and show cultural adaptability and flexibility.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF A LEADER AT MNCS

According to Pattrak (2006), the following are identified as essential skills and competencies of a global leader.

- Cosmopolitan outlook – should be flexible to operate comfortably in a pluralistic cultural environment
- Skilled at International communication – understands the complexities of interaction with people from other cultures and fair knowledge of foreign languages would be an assert.

- Culturally sensitive – uses experiences in different national, regional or organizational cultures to build relationships with culturally different people, while understanding his / her own culture and its cultural biases.
- Capable of rapid acculturation – rapidly acculturates or adjusts to different cultural setting.
- Knowledge about cultural and institutional influence on management – understands how national culture and country's social institutions affect the entire management process.
- A facilitator of subordinates' international performance – uses a deep understanding of cultural differences in work and living to prepare subordinates for successful overseas experiences.
- User of cultural synergy – takes advantage of cultural differences by finding a synergy that combines the strength of each cultural group and by using performance standards understandable across culture. This results in higher levels of organizational performance than that produced by culturally homogeneous companies.
- A promoter and user of the growing world cultures – understand and take advantage of technology and media to support international business.
- A commitment to continuous improvement in self awareness and renewal – leaders should be able to fine tune his skills to meet country's specific needs. Research on cross cultural differences in leadership indicated the following positive and negative traits in a global leader (Anne and Joris, 2004)

UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED TRAITS/BEHAVIOUR

- Trustworthy, Just, Honest, Plans ahead, Encouraging, Positive attitude, Good bargaining skills, Dynamic, Motivator, Confidence builder, Dependable, Intelligent, Decisive, Win-win problem solver, Skilled administrator, Communicator, Informed, Team builder.

UNIVERSALLY UNACCEPTED TRAITS/BEHAVIOUR

- Loner, Asocial, Non cooperative, Non explicit, Egocentric, Ruthless, Dictatorial.

CULTURALLY SPECIFIC TRAITS/BEHAVIOUR

- Group orientation, Self protectiveness, Participative skills, Humaneness, Autonomy, Charisma, Humility.

METHODS TO DEVELOP CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Given the understanding of essential qualities required for developing global leaders in our country, we can now look at one essential training required for honing ones leadership skills. That would be **developing cultural sensitivity**. Cultural sensitivity can be achieved through –

- Setting the right business context for diversity. Use balance not quotas to achieve diversity.
- Define the dimensions of cultural sensitivity for the organization. Tackle the issue with sincerity from the top of the organization down to all levels.
- Set expectations that cultural sensitivity is critical competency early in an individual's tenure with the organization.

- Introduce programs that expose potential leaders to new cultures.
- Introduce a cross cultural sensitivity assessment or add cultural sensitivity as a core competency in the existing 360 degree feedback program. Tap into feedback from many channels, including local line managers.
- Conduct cross cultural learning programs on a regular basis. Hold cross cultural sharing sessions (eg. Sharing of recipes/festival celebrations) to build the appreciation of differences among the staff.
- Build emotional intelligence – work on the values of each leader to improve openness toward the culture of others. Encourage and reward displays of values such as respect, empathy and humility.
- Hire individuals who have a proven record of adapting to diverse cultures.
- Engage in reverse mentoring which is highly effective.

Reflecting on all the facts put forward, it is but obvious that future Indian Business leaders need to develop a global mind set to lead in an era of complexity and international expansions. Both academic curriculum and training workshops should build these skills among potential leaders and mentors should be active in inculcating among students and managers the qualities and cognitive mind set for leading their teams in an efficient and effective manner.

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